

(ii) Description of the type of technical assistance and/or training to be provided and the tasks to be contracted.

(iii) Description of how the project will be evaluated and provide clearly stated goals and the method proposed to measure the results that will be obtained.

(iv) Documentation of need for proposed service. Provide detailed explanation of how the proposed services differ from other similar services being provided in the same area.

(v) Personnel on staff or to be contracted to provide the service and their experience with similar projects.

(vi) Statement indicating the number of months it takes to complete the project or service.

(vii) Documentation on cost effectiveness of project. Provide the cost per association to be served or proposed cost of personnel to provide assistance.

(viii) Other factors for consideration, such as emergency situation, training need identified, health or safety problems, geographic distribution, Rural Development Office recommendations, etc.

§ 1775.11 Priority.

The application and supporting information will be used to determine the applicant's priority for available funds. All applications will be reviewed and scored for funding priority in accordance with RUS Guide 1775-2. Points will be given only for factors that are well documented in the application package and, in the opinion of the RUS, meet the objective outlined under each factor. The following is a listing of the criteria that will be used to select the applications that meet the objectives of the technical assistance program.

(a) Projects proposing to give priority for available services to rural communities having a population less than 5,500 and/or below 2,500.

(b) Projects proposing to give priority for available services to low income communities.

(c) Projects that will provide assistance in a multi-State area.

(d) Points will be awarded for work plans that clearly describe the goals

and objectives of the project, how they will be accomplished in targeted communities, and what measurement of accomplishment will be used.

(e) Projects containing needs assessment (*i.e.* actual issue or problem being addressed) clearly defined and supported by data.

(f) Projects containing evaluation methods that are specific to the activity, clearly defined, measurable, and with projected outcomes.

(g) Applicants proposing to use at least 75 percent of the total grant amount for their own staff, or the staff of an affiliated organization to provide services for a project instead of contracting with an outside organization for the services.

(h) Projects providing technical assistance/training that accomplish the objective within a 12-month or less timeframe.

(i) Projects primarily providing "hands on" technical assistance and training, *i.e.*, on-site assistance as opposed to preparation and distribution of printed material, to communities with existing water and waste systems which are experiencing operation and maintenance or management problems.

(j) Cash or in kind support of project from non-federal sources.

(k) Ability to demonstrate sustainability of project without Federal financial support.

§ 1775.12 Grant processing.

(a) *Single State applications.* (1) Grant applications submitted at the State level will receive a letter acknowledging receipt and confirmation that all information required for a full application was included in the packet. The State will notify the applicant of missing information. The applicant will have 14 business days to respond.

(2) The State Office will review applications for eligibility. Those applicants that are deemed ineligible will be notified. Applicants deemed eligible will be forwarded to the National Office for funding consideration.

(3) The National Office will review all applications received from State Offices. Applications will compete on a priority basis and will be scored and ranked. The applications receiving the

highest scores and subject to the availability of funds will be selected for final processing. The National Office will send these applications back to the State Office for processing. The State Office will notify the applicant(s) that they have been selected for funding.

(4) Applicants not selected for funding due to low priority rating shall be notified by the State Office.

(b) *National and multi-State applications.* (1) National and multi-State applications submitted to the National Office will receive a letter acknowledging receipt and confirmation that all information required for a full application was included in the packet. The National Office shall notify the applicant of missing information. The applicant will have 14 business days to respond.

(2) The National Office will review applications for eligibility. Those applications that are deemed ineligible will be notified. Applications deemed eligible will be reviewed and given a rating score. Applications receiving the highest scores will be grouped with those received from State Offices for funding consideration.

(3) The National Office will review all applications received. Applications will compete on a priority basis and will be scored and ranked. The applications receiving the highest scores and subject to the availability of funds will be notified by the National Office that they have been selected for funding. The National Office shall conduct final processing of multi-State and national applications.

(4) Multi-State and National applicants not selected for funding due to low priority rating will be notified by the National Office.

(c) *Low priority applications.* Applications that cannot be funded in the fiscal year received will not be retained for consideration in the following fiscal year and will be handled as outlined in paragraph (a)(4) or (b)(4) of this section.

§ 1775.13 Grant agreement.

Applicants selected for funding will complete a grant agreement, RUS Guide 1775-1, which outlines the terms and conditions of the grant award.

§§ 1775.14–1775.17 [Reserved]

§ 1775.18 Fund disbursement.

Grantees will be reimbursed as follows:

(a) SF-270, "Request for Advance or Reimbursement," will be completed by the grantee and submitted to either the State or National Office not more frequently than monthly.

(b) Upon receipt of a properly completed SF-270, the funds will be requested through the field office terminal system. Ordinarily, payment will be made within 30 days after receipt of a proper request for reimbursement.

(c) Grantees are encouraged to use women- and minority-owned banks (a bank which is owned at least 50 percent by women or minority group members) for the deposit and disbursement of funds.

§ 1775.19 Grant cancellation or major changes.

Any change in the scope of the project, budget adjustments of more than 10 percent of the total budget, or any other significant change in the project must be reported to and approved by the approval official by written amendment to RUS Guide 1775-1. Any change not approved may be cause for termination of the grant.

§ 1775.20 Reporting.

(a) Grantees shall constantly monitor performance to ensure that time schedules are being met, projected work by time periods is being accomplished, and other performance objectives are being achieved.

(b) SF-269, "Financial Status Report (short form)," and a project performance activity report will be required of all grantees on a quarterly basis, due 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter.

(c) A final project performance report will be required with the last SF-269 due 90 days after the end of the last quarter in which the project is completed. The final report may serve as the last quarterly report.

(d) All multi-State grantees are to submit an original of each report to the National Office. Grantees serving only one State are to submit an original of each report to the State Office.